

LEIGH HUNT'S JOURNAL;

A MISCELLANY

FOR THE CULTIVATION OF

THE MEMORABLE, THE PROGRESSIVE, AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

No. 16.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1851.

[PRICE 1]d.

The Weekly Novelist.

No. XVI.

WHICH IS THE HEIRESS?

A TALE.

PART I.

"So, the Nabob is dead at last," said Frank Dawton, who made one at a dinner-party at the house of Lady Travers.

"That is old news, and, therefore, no news," replied his friend, Tom Brereton; "but can you tell us who is his heir?"

"Has he no relations?" asked another voice.

"None nearer than sixth cousins, or something of the kind."

"And is there no will?"

"None has as yet been found."

"What will he cut up for?" asked Frank.

"Something enormous. His landed property in England brought him from fifteen to twenty thousand a year. Then there is half a million in the funds, besides East India bonds to an immense amount."

"Here's a bumper to his safe passage to the devil," said Tom. "He accumulated money for its own sake merely, and has left it to his heir to follow the nobler paths of ambition with the princely inheritance at his disposal."

"And I have no doubt," said Lady Tonbridge, a proud woman of high family, with half a dozen of unmarried daughters, "that so potent a charm will obtain him ready admission to those circles to which noble birth and real chivalry were once, indeed, the only passports."

"And if he should have any hesitation in approaching the charmed circle, he will not want friends who will ease him of his scruples and his wealth at the same time," said Miss Skipton, a disappointed jilt of forty.

"Nay," interposed Lady Travers, trying to prevent the pending collision; "his fortune might be put to a worse use than purchasing admission to the great world. At least, aspirations of the kind are too common, I'm afraid, to make censure very safe in any of us."

"Oh!" replied Lady Tonbridge, "with a vice so general, charity is undoubtedly incumbent on us all; but this need not prevent us from profiting by the

advice of those who have learned from experience the hopelessness of the game."

Miss Skipton, with an angry blush, resumed the discussion on the last new opera, in which she was engaged with her next neighbour.

"And can no one tell us," said their hostess, "who is the happy, luckless person doomed to inherit all this splendid misery?"

"Of that I believe I can inform your ladyship," said Sir Albert Fordham, a middle-aged, married man. There was an instantaneous pause in the conversation. The noisy clatter of plates and dishes was hushed to an extreme pianissimo, as every one, in breathless expectation, awaited the coming intelligence.

"The property," continued the baronet, "will descend to a lady, the only child of a second maternal cousin of the deceased."

"Married or single?" exclaimed the Honourable Mr. Gregson, the spendthrift younger son of Lord D—.

"Young?" asked another.

"Handsome?" interrogated Tom.

"Psha!" interrupted Mr. Frumpton, the poet; "wit, youth, and beauty, what are ye to wealth?"

"What's her family?" interrupted Mr. Flammerton, who, being the son of a man who had made his fortune by contracting to supply government with sea biscuits during the last war, had a great horror of people of low birth and mean extraction.

Lady Travers was now obliged gently to remind her guests, that if they huddled their questions so upon their informant, he would be unable to answer any of them. Silence being restored, the baronet proceeded to inform the company that the heiress to the magnificent property of Southoaks (the residence of the late Nabob), was a widow neither young nor handsome, if report spoke truly—that she had been living, since the death of her husband, in a distant county, on a small but competent income—that, with regard to the property, rumour, commonly so apt to exaggerate, had, on this occasion, scarcely exceeded the truth; the property having been proved to be above fifty thousand a year. This was all the authentic information that could be at present obtained. Even the place of the

* A paraphrase, we presume, on Pope's line, "*Fame, wealth, and honours, what are ye to love?*"—See Abelard and Eloisa.

lady's residence had not transpired, further than that it was in one of the northern counties.

But whatever were the hopes, conjectures, or schemes to which this information gave rise, they were for a while doomed to disappointment. Month after month passed, but nothing more was heard of the fair inheritor of Southoaks, with its small but elegant mansion, its extensive park, and romantic pleasure-grounds. Mrs. Crawley (such was the lady's name) continued to reside in the north, without showing any desire to change her residence or condition. Conjecture being thus baffled and wonder exhausted, the interest at first excited began gradually to subside into the fitful starts of wonder and curiosity from bread-and-butter Misses and unexpected younger brothers; but when, at the end of a twelvemonth the heiress still appeared not, the baffled expectants began to vent their chagrin in the usual way. The lady, who had at first been pronounced to be barely forty, was now declared to be upwards of fifty. Stories began to be circulated that she was of a sullen, morose, and sordid disposition; in short, that she had all the vices of an old maid, without the excuses of disappointment or blighted affections, that may be so often pleaded for that vituperated race. After the due expression of these opinions, the subject was dropped, and the heiress of Southoaks seemed about to be forgotten, when one morning Frank Dawson, entering Lady Travers's drawing-room, began:—

"So, Mrs. Crawley has taken possession of her house at last."

But the party assembled were already discussing the subject.

"I think it was hardly consistent with her years, her class, or the reserved manners and retired habits that we have heard so much of," said Miss Skipton, "to enter her domain in such an ostentatious way—an open barouche and four, with out-riders, grooms, and attendants, and all the paraphernalia of a duke's retinue."

"Oh, I agree with you," said Lady Tonbridge; "there is nothing more ridiculous than to see people assuming a station to which they have been neither born nor bred; or," with a glance of the gay and youthful attire of the antiquated coquette, "affecting characters to which time has deprived them of all claim."

"Your ladyship is in the right," said the youthful Lady Charlotte Melcourt. "Did you hear what happened the other day to the Miss Crashes? Like many other arrogant people, they have a habit of affecting the character of rustic graces, and sallying out dressed up in old bonnets and cast-off shawls. A few days ago they rambled in this plight on to a farm at some distance from home, accompanied by their brother, also habited like a rustic. Here they began treading down the farmer's corn and beans, regardless of his angry remonstrances, and young hopeful was so impudent as to raise his switch at the good man, which was wrested from him with such a sudden and violent jerk as to cause a severe sprain of the wrist, so that the party were compelled to retreat, the brother abusing the farmer in terms which I cannot repeat, and his sisters muttering the words 'bear' and 'brute' all the way home. The story has transpired with so many ridiculous additions, that the girls thought it prudent to stop away from the Duke of Gainsborough's ball the other night. The adventure has effectually cured them of their rusticity, which was the more absurd from their notorious arrogance."

"Well," exclaimed Lady Travers, "after this, we must not quarrel with Mrs. Crawley for her barouche and four."

"Pardon me, madam," said Frank, "she arrived on horseback, accompanied by a single groom and preceded by two female domestics only."

"Lord!" said Miss Lynton, a young lady of seventeen, opening her eyes till they were as round as rings, "I should so like to have seen her—I wonder what

she will do living all alone in that place—I should die of ennui."

"Let us rejoice, Emily," said her father, "that you have the privilege of transferring that burden to your friends, whenever you are afflicted with it."

"I wonder," pursued the young lady—the fair Emily had a great talent at wondering—"I wonder whether she is handsome?"

"Of her personal appearance and manners," returned Frank, solemnly, "nothing has as yet transpired."

"Oh, yes, there has," exclaimed Emily, eager to get in her share of the news, "mama's maid told her that Gingham, Mrs. Tillotson's housekeeper, had heard that Mr. Frumpton, who was passing through the park when Mrs. Crawley arrived, says that she is not more than forty, and very good-looking, too, of her age, and that she rode one of the finest roan mares he ever beheld—no, it was the groom that rode the roan, and Mrs. Crawley was mounted on a beautiful chestnut."

The truth was that a few days before, a lady, with a single attendant, had been seen to descend from a one-horse vehicle, at the mansion of Southoaks. It was soon ascertained that this lady was Mrs. Crawley herself—curiosity had been active of course, but nothing more was, as yet, known. The lady had once only been seen, wrapped up in a great shawl, taking an airing in the garden, and on a peep into the stable, the roan and chestnut, mentioned by the fair Emily, had been discovered, but though the horses were there, no carriage of any sort was to be found; the vehicle in which Mrs. Crawley arrived having, in fact, been a hired one.

Tom Brereton now entered the room, with a very important piece of intelligence. He had had an interview with the lady the day before. In fact, Tom, with the laudable desire of gratifying his own and his friends' curiosity with the earliest information on this subject, had, as soon as the lady's arrival was known, obtained leave to view the house and grounds, and while inspecting a piece of beautiful mosaic, desecrated Mrs. Crawley taking her daily airing in the garden, into which he immediately descended, "but," said he, "the grounds are so extensive and intricate, that I was obliged to dodge and track her for some time before I could come up with her." To the inquiries that followed, Tom replied, with an air half indifferent, half contemptuous, "that rumour had certainly not erred in saying that the lady was neither young nor handsome, nor, if it had added, that she was neither good-tempered nor well bred, would it have been very far from the truth."

"Oh, sir," said Lady Tonbridge, "you know we must take the manners of people of Mrs. Crawley's class as we find them."

"Very true," returned Tom; "but really I hardly know to what class of nondescripts to refer the lady, unless we were to go to Van Amburgh's menagerie at the Zoological Gardens."

This speech was received with a loud laugh by Emily and Miss Skipton.

"What!" said Lady Travers, "is she so very gauche?"

"Oh, madam, rustic to a pitch of the ludicrous—although I addressed her with scrupulous politeness, she resented my intrusion as if it had been unauthorized by herself."

"Perhaps, my dear sir," said Mr. Lynton, "in your anxiety to bring us early intelligence, you may, without knowing it, have betrayed your purpose, and thus unintentionally have given her offence."

"You excite my curiosity," said Lady Tonbridge; "pray, when might one see this amiable specimen of good temper and elegant breeding?"

"Oh, any day, I believe, that your ladyship has a mind for half an hour's amusement," replied Tom, delighted at the prospect of seeing Mrs. Crawley

subjected to the inspection and comments of such a woman as Lady Tonbridge; "she has not yet stirred beyond the precincts of her own domain, which she seems to occupy with the true instinct of the dog in the manger. I should like, of all things, to see your ladyship turn her inside out."

"Ha, ha!—well, well—the first morning I have to spare."

Mr. Lynton was right—Tom had betrayed his purpose to Mrs. Crawley, whose suspicions had been excited by his early application to see the house, and were confirmed when she saw him "tracking" and "dodging" her in spite of her efforts to avoid him. She therefore received his graceful bow and salutation with a coldness that not only put an end to further advances, but confirmed the ill reports of her temper and breeding; and as she did not seem to possess any of those personal attractions which blunt the edge of ridicule on these occasions, the gentleman did not think it worth while to conceal his opinion, which she resented in a manner that cut so near the quick, that Tom retreated utterly puzzled and discomfited. His report, however, was not so well received as he expected. The women, indeed, Lady Travers excepted, one and all heartily agreed in his opinion of her vulgarity and ill-temper, protesting that they would take the first opportunity of quizzing her to her face; but single ladies of fifty thousand a year are not so readily given up to general contempt—several gentlemen were of opinion that Tom's visit had been premature and indelicate.

One morning, about a week or ten days after the foregoing conversation, Mrs. Crawley was sitting in a small upper room of her house, at Southoaks, overlooking the spacious and beautiful park. She was alone with her little girl, a child between three or four years old, who was playing about her knees, when a servant, putting into her hand two cards, intimated that Lady Tonbridge and her daughter solicited the favour of waiting upon her. Mrs. Crawley, glancing at the cards, quietly nodded her assent, and presently descended to the drawing-room to receive her visitors. While the ceremonies of introduction are proceeding, we will briefly describe her.

Mrs. Crawley was a tall, dark woman, apparently about forty, with a form possessing the matronly fullness natural to her age and height. Her features, without being decidedly handsome, were large and strongly marked. The eyes, however, were full, dark, and lustrous. Their expression was grave—almost to melancholy, and the whole countenance received a strange and sinister look, from one of her eyebrows being formed of thick bushy grey hairs.* She was dressed with puritanical plainness and simplicity—a dark stuff gown and a close cap—the only expensive article of her toilet was an immense Indian shawl that enveloped her up to the throat. She received her visitors with graceful and well bred courtesy, if not with the respect and *empressement* to which her ladyship might think she was entitled from one so far beneath her in rank.

After a few remarks had passed on the common topics of the hour, her ladyship, rising and walking indolently to the window, proceeded to pay her hostess, with an air of nonchalance, some compliments on the beauty of the view and the extent and appearance of the pleasure-grounds, adding, "and if report speaks truly, they may vie with the famous 'maze' at Hampton Court, which has been so long an object of curiosity to the good citizens of London and their families."

"Will your ladyship and Miss Tonbridge," said Mrs. Crawley, without noticing the sneering tone of this remark, "like to walk over them, or to look at the house, which, although small, contains some objects of curiosity to the connoisseur."

* The writer once knew a young lady with this defect.

"Oh, Lud, no!" exclaimed her ladyship; "I have not time at present; and besides, I hear that the Nabob was a great lover of Indian curiosities, and filled his place with snakes, wild beasts, and the like abominations, which, for my own part, I would rather run ten miles to avoid than walk as many yards to see. Positively, my dear madam, you must have the place carefully cleared of such objects, if you expect it to be visited by any of the real gentility of the county."

Mrs. Crawley, slightly colouring, quietly replied, that the Nabob had indeed brought over from India a tame tiger, and some of the more harmless kind of snakes, but that the tiger was dead, and she had parted with the snakes to the Directors of the Zoological Gardens, and that all that remains of his Indian collection were a few stuffed birds in glass cases. While Mrs. Crawley was speaking, Lady Tonbridge had raised her glass to a small picture on the wall, which she now seemed to be examining with great curiosity.

"Pray, what is that?" said she.

"It is a Holy Family, by Corregio," replied her hostess.

"Corregio!" repeated her ladyship, with an emphasis. "Charlotte, my dear—to her daughter—" do tell me—I have such a memory—is it Lord Harrowcourt, or Sir Albert Fordham, who has the original of that thing?"

"Sir Albert Fordham, mama," replied the young lady; "you know he purchased it, at a great price, from a gentleman at Paris, who had it from a Signor—Signor—Somebody—an Italian."

"True, true," said her mother, advancing to the picture and scanning it through her glass. "It is a clear copy enough, and may have deceived sounder judgments than the poor Nabob's."

"The piece," replied Mrs. Crawley, in the decided tone of one who would allow of no further contradiction or discussion, "is an undoubted original. It was purchased at Rome by the Nabob himself, and a few months before his death, a copy was taken at the request of Sir Albert Fordham, and purchased by him."

"Oh! an original is it?" replied her ladyship, who was now troubled with an awkward recollection of Sir Albert having told her that his picture was only a copy. "Well, I protest," she added, dropping her glass, and turning from the object of her scrutiny with the utmost indifference, "that they do these things so well nowadays, that it is difficult to distinguish originals from copies, except that the latter, being generally fresher, are often preferable to their smoke-dried prototypes."

"Your judgment in pictures, Lady Tonbridge," said Mrs. Crawley, rising and ringing the bell, "is, I perceive, as sound and valuable as you have just shown it to be in Indian curiosities and gardening; but your ladyship must excuse me further at present. Take Lady Tonbridge's orders"—to the footman who entered; and then, slightly bending to her guests, she left the room without another word.

Lady Tonbridge was an arrogant bad-tempered woman, whose pride, aided by her rank, position, and an unscrupulous love of ridicule, had made her both the idol and the dread of all the fashion-hunters of the circles in which she moved, and, for this reason, her opinion of the heiress of Southoaks was looked upon as likely to decide that lady's real merits, and to settle her future position in society. Now, Lady Tonbridge had bethought herself that Mrs. Crawley, with her enormous wealth, and the influence it would give her in the world, might be made very conveniently subservient to her ladyship's ambitious views for her family. On mature reflection, therefore, she resolved not, for the sake of a few minutes indulgence of her pride, to come to an irreparable breach with Mrs. Crawley, but determined that after giving her hostess, by means of a *quantum sufficit* of arrogance and civil insult, a due impression of the great dignity and importance of her

visitor, to change her tone, assume an air of condescension and encouragement, report favourably of her, and bestow on her as much notice and patronage as might answer her ladyship's purpose. But her reception had completely disconcerted her whole scheme, and left her no alternative but to crush the woman outright, who had dared literally to turn her out of her house with the most undisguised contempt and indifference. The ill reports about her were now aided by all the weight of her visitor's authority, who pronounced her to be an ignorant, morose termagant—a female cynic, in short, who would inevitably taint the reputation of all who sought her acquaintance. Lady Tonbridge, however, would not have succeeded so well in her purpose, if she had not intimidated, by a few judicious sarcasms on the lady's close cap and grey *eyebrows*, that she was much older than she really looked, and also to hint that the huge shawl in which Mrs. Crawley was always wrapped was worn to hide some personal defect; a hint which was eagerly circulated by all the young ladies of her ladyship's acquaintance. What the defect was, no one could tell. Some said that it was a slight projection of the spinal bone—in plain terms—a hump. Others asserted that it had arisen from a dislocation of the hip joint, producing what is called lopsidedness, and Tom Brereton now recollected having observed a slight hitch in her gait when he saw her in the garden. Some defect must therefore exist beyond a doubt; and as Mrs. Crawley wore nothing but the plainest clothes, kept no equipage, and persevered in her habits of seclusion, she soon became generally regarded by the circles of —shire, as an odious close-hearted parasite, whose mind had become creaked by years and deformity—who was ignorant of the uses, and therefore unworthy the possession, of her princely inheritance. A few families who had intended to visit her, finding the current of feeling so strong against her, changed their intention—and, in short, she was soon abandoned to contempt and oblivion.

And now Fortune, joining with her adversaries, was resolved, as it seemed, to punish her for her sullen seclusion from the world, by raising up another claimant to the estates of Southoaks.

Mrs. Crawley inherited the property as the heir-at-law, the Nabob having, as was supposed, died intestate. A document, however, had now been discovered, which, although not drawn up in a legal form, was thought to have all the force of a legal instrument. By this document, which had been found among the Nabob's papers by his solicitor, the estates would pass to the descendants of a younger brother of Mrs. Crawley's father, an officer in the Indian army, and friend of the testator. This gentleman had returned to England many years before the Nabob, and died, leaving an only orphan daughter. She was now, like the present possessor, a widow, although some years younger than her rival. When the Nabob returned to England, she was on the continent, where she remained during the short residue of his life; and this was said to be the reason why he had left her claim on so frail a tenure as a paper hastily drawn up by himself, without witnesses, and then, as it seemed, thrown aside and forgotten.

Now, it may be supposed that a piece of information like the above, coming on the coteries of —shire under such singular circumstances, would have created some interest among them.—Not so, however. Whether they thought the new claimant's hopes were visionary, or that the subject of Southoaks—its owners and its destinies—had become threadbare, the news fell all but still-born on the ears of the recipients; and when, moreover, it was understood that Mrs. Delfield, the new claimant, was not only of the same class, but bore a family likeness to her rival, both in person and temper, the trifling interest that had been felt on the subject sunk at once into the contemptuous indifference

which we commonly feel for the quarrels and contests of those beneath our regard or notice.

A few weeks before the new claimant appeared, an incident had occurred which had created considerable interest among the natives of —shire, for many miles round the spot where the occurrence had taken place. A young man, the son of a gentleman of importance in the county, had been stopped on the high-road, after dark, by a couple of ruffians. The youth, who was possessed of more courage than prudence, answered the demand for his money by drawing out a pistol, but was, at the same instant, brought to the ground by a heavy blow from a cudgel. The pistol went off, flashing in the face of his assailant, and its contents passing through his hat. In the momentary confusion consequent on the discharge, the young gentleman recovered his legs, and, grasping a thick stick which he held in his hand, was in the act of springing on his assailant, when a brace of pistols were, at the same instant, discharged at him, the ball of one only taking effect by lodging in the fleshy part of his shoulder, just above the arm-pit. Finding their victim yet unsubdued, they attacked him with their cudgels; but the youth, who was as "cunning of fence" as his assailants, or a little more so, continued to defend himself with such skill and courage, that it is probable that he might at last have tired out his adversaries, or escaped from them, had he not become faint from the loss of blood. The ruffians, seeing him getting weak, pressed their advantage. He received several severe blows on the head and body, and his fate now seemed to be inevitable,—when the sound of horses' hoofs was heard, and the next instant a shower of blows from the butt-end of a small riding-whip, were dealt with such effect on the heads and faces of the villains, that they staggered backward, and then, fancying they were suddenly outnumbered, fled with the greatest speed. The young gentleman, thus freed from his assailants, turned to thank the person who had rendered him this timely and invaluable aid, when, to his astonishment, he perceived that his deliverer was a woman; but ere he could find words to express his surprise or thanks, he sank down in a swoon. The woman sprang from her horse, and was proceeding to examine his wounds, when some people from a neighbouring farm, having heard the pistols, and knowing the neighbourhood to be infested with a gang of desperadoes, came up armed with pitchforks and other implements. It was soon ascertained that the young man had swooned from loss of blood only; and the lady having bound up his wound hastily with her handkerchief, recommended the people to take him, with all speed, to a surgeon whom she named, in the next town. She then remounted her horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The young gentleman's hurts, although severe, were none of them dangerous; and he was able, in a day or two, to attend the examination of the ruffians, who had been taken. All the witnesses attended, save only the one who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing the matter to so fortunate a termination.

The assault was a good deal talked about, and Edgar Merton, the hero of the adventure, much praised for the skill and courage with which he had defended himself so long against such fearful odds. Sundry were the conjectures as to who his amazonian deliverer could be. A lady riding alone after dark! All the bold horse-women in the county were enumerated, especially those who were not very nice in their observance of the proprieties; but there was some difficulty in fixing on the right one.

"Oh! depend upon it," said Lady Tonbridge, in her usual decided way, "that it is no other than that mad-cap, Lady Barbara Daredevil. You know she has obtained the name of the man-woman for her feats in this and other ways." But, in spite of the off-handed way in which her ladyship was accustomed to resolve

doubts, and settle difficulties, in these cases, there were, on the present occasion, several dissentients to her opinion. Conjecture, however, was not left long at fault.

One other circumstance, connected with the attack on Edgar, is worthy mention. The young gentleman, who had hitherto been remarkable for his companionable qualities and love of society, got pensive and abstracted, took long solitary rambles, and became addicted to poetry and day-dreaming.

We must now change the scene to the house of Sir Albert Fordham, who was entertaining a party of fashionables at his country-seat, among whom were several of the persons already mentioned. It was about the hour of luncheon and the company were lounging about Sir Albert's handsome suite of drawing-rooms, engaged in desultory conversation. The baronet, who was a retired barrister, was occupied with a professional brother in canvassing the claims of the rival candidates for Southoaks; but the matter was disputed in a merely professional way, neither gentlemen showing the least personal interest in the success of either candidate. Sir Albert, who was one of the best lawyers in the kingdom, was of opinion that the new claim was a sound one, and mentioned several cases that had come within his own practice, in which claims had been established upon similar documents. After the subject was dropped by the professional brethren, it was taken up with an air of nonchalance by some of the company.

"I hear," said Lord Dulwich, a young nobleman just come to his estates, "that the late Nabob was a man of genuine taste, and that his collections are both extensive and rare. Pity that they have fallen into the hands of one so little able to appreciate them."

"Why, what can you expect, my lord," replied Lady Tonbridge, "from people whom fortune has raised to a sphere for which nature and education have alike unfitted them?"

"I will ride over and look at the place," said his lordship, "the first morning that I have to spare."

"Have a care, my lord," returned her ladyship, laughing. "I have myself once done the lady the honour of a visit, with no intention, Heaven knows"—Lady Tonbridge was very fond of calling on Heaven to indorse her lies; "but of introducing her, had I found her worthy, into the best society, but my reception was anything but such as to induce me to repeat my visit; and there is Mr. Brereton, who, I believe, can boast some experience of the same kind."

"Egad, my lord," said the elegant Tom, "you may as well thrust your head at once into a mastiff's kennel, as venture within cover of the mistress of Southoaks."

"And they say," said Miss Lynton, "that her rival is as bad."

"They say, my dear, who say?" said her father.

"La! papa, why, everybody."

"Then everybody has seen her?"

"Oh dear, no; nobody has seen her; but *they* say that she is very ugly, and has thick lips, and grey hair, and is very bad tempered. In short, just like Mrs. Crawley, only not hump-backed."

"Well," exclaimed Lady Tonbridge. "Heaven keep them asunder, lest one or both of them, as the man in the play says, come by 'a predestinate scratched face.'"

"Lord, papa! look," exclaimed Emily. Mr. Lynton turned to the window at which his daughter was standing, and which commanded an extensive view of the highway, and she pointed out to him the figure of a horse, which, though at a considerable distance, it was plain had run away with its rider.

"He is off with him sure enough," exclaimed Tom, coming to the window, with two or three more. At about half a mile from Sir Albert's house, the road turned at a sharp angle, and thence ran in a straight line by the baronet's gates.

"He'll not turn that corner, and keep his seat, for a hundred," said one of the gentlemen.

"Done!" exclaimed another voice. The taker was right, the angle was cleared at the moment of closing the bet.

"You must draw stakes," said Tom, who was viewing the approaching object through a lorgnette.

"How so? Didn't I say that he would clear the point?"

"Yes; but it is no *he*, it's a *she*."

This brought the company to the windows in a crowd, and it now became apparent that the rider was a woman. The horse came on at a fearful speed, plunging the earth with its hoofs, and throwing up a cloud of dust at every bound. The groom in attendance, far from being able to give his lady any aid, could not, with his utmost efforts, keep his position, but had fallen many hundred yards behind. She was now within a quarter of a mile of the spot where the road passed the entrance to Sir Albert's ground, when the horse, either from sudden and injudicious exertion of the reins, or that the animal was startled anew at some object that crossed its path, began rearing, kicking, and plunging so fearfully, that an exclamation of fear broke involuntarily from several of the spectators.

"She's off now, for a thousand," said the gentleman who made the former bet; but there were no takers, and Lord Dulwich, and one or two more ran out to render what aid they could at a catastrophe which now seemed to be inevitable; but before they had got across the sweep, the lady, without even reeling in the saddle, had, to the surprise of all, reduced the horse to a state of perfect quiescence; and now moving forward, she presently reached the lodge, and passing through the gate, approached the house at an easy canter.

"Who is it?" asked three or four at once.

But their host could give them no assistance.

"I should say it was Lady Barbara Daredevil," said Lady Tonbridge; "but that the livery is different," calling attention to the groom.

"The figure is too large for Lady Barbara," said a young lady, raising her glass and critically examining the approaching object.

"Lady Barbara is an excellent horse-woman," said Lord Dulwich; "but I doubt whether the feat we have just witnessed is not quite beyond her."

Meantime the lady had reached the house, and reined up her horse, which stood foaming, champing, pawing, and shewing sundry signs of its recent excitement.

A servant now put a card into Sir Albert's hands. He read the name aloud, *Mrs. Delfield*, and then, laying down the card, it was taken up by several of the company as if to ascertain whether he had read aright.

"The new heiress of Southoaks, by Jove!" exclaimed Tom.

"Shew Mrs. Delfield into the library, and say I will wait on her immediately," said the baronet.

While the lady was dismounting, he explained to his guests the cause of her visit. Sir Albert, having heard that she had expressed a wish for the opinion of so able a lawyer as himself, respecting her claim, he had immediately called upon her for the purpose of tendering his advice; but she was in town. She had by letter acknowledged his polite attention, telling him that she would take the liberty of waiting on him herself, when she returned to the country. The baronet now withdrew to the library to receive his visitor.

Mrs. Delfield was about three or four and thirty, and although a decidedly large woman, possessed a form of such exquisite symmetry, that it was not until she stood beside a woman of the ordinary size, that the height and proportions of her figure became apparent. Her features presented nothing very striking to

the connoisseur, except the eyes, which were large and of the deepest blue; but Mrs. Delfield possessed a countenance and manner in which deep feeling was so happily combined with the social and laughing graces, that he must indeed have been a hypocrite who had not forgotten his office in her presence. She arose on the entrance of Sir Albert, and, with a face radiant with the pleasure of expressing its thanks, and blushing at its own emotion, thanked him with such genial warmth for the offer of his services, that Sir Albert, had he been a young unmarried man, might, in his turn, have paid the reckoning of his gratitude, by surrendering his heart on the spot. An interview with the lady's legal advisers was soon arranged, and a pressing invitation to partake of some refreshment being accepted, Mrs. Delfield was conducted to the drawing-room, and received the elegant flattery which was offered to her on the singular feat of skill and boldness that she had just performed, with the ease and self-possession of one who was neither unused to such incense, nor disposed to value it at more than its real worth. Refreshments being brought in, Mrs. Delfield was prevailed on to take off her riding-hat, and displayed a head of the finest auburn hair, and in such profusion, that the operations of the toilet seemed hardly able to confine it within its proper limits. In a room full of strangers, it was not to be expected that she would converse more than good-breeding absolutely required; yet was natural reserve so happily blended with a graceful self-reliance in all she said and did, that the interest which she had first excited, was redoubled before the end of her short visit. When the refreshments were removed, Mrs. Delfield took her leave; and the company dispersed to occupy themselves until dinner. Meantime, on an inquiry of the lady's groom, as to the qualities and breed of her horse, the man had replied that his lady would never ride any but the highest mettled horses,—that the accident of to-day was of too frequent occurrence to cause either surprise or alarm to her attendants; and that his mistress would unscrupulously ride horses that the boldest horsemen would hesitate to mount.

The first course had hardly been removed from Sir Albert's dinner-table on that day, before Mrs. Delfield and her claim became the subject, not of cold and professional, but of animated and interesting conversation. The baronet repeated his opinion of the claim, and it was listened to with considerable interest, and received with general satisfaction.

"Fore George!" exclaimed Tom, "I shall be overjoyed at her success, if it were only to see the estates wrested from the unhallowed gripe of the present possessor."

"One would really think," said Lady Tonbridge, "that to see the strange beings that Fortune is so often raising from the base to the apex of society, that the fickle goddess must sometimes do so for the purpose of laughing at the whimsical effects of her own caprices."

"Say rather, madam," said Mr. Flammerton, with a profound bow across the table at her ladyship, "that she is willing to teach us the vanity of riches when unaccompanied by the nobler attributes of birth, education, and breeding."

"Nor should we complain of her decrees," said Mr. Frumpton, "if, after having indulged her good-humoured malice, she would restore her victims to their primitive obscurity, as she seems likely to do in the present instance."

"But with regard to our new acquaintance here," resumed her ladyship, after acknowledging Mr. Flammerton's compliment by a gracious bend: "Mrs. Belial—Belial."

"Delfield, madam!" exclaimed half a dozen young ladies at once.

"Although," she continued, unheeding the interruption, "we might go further and fare worse for a neighbour, yet we must not forget that she is of the same brood as her rival. However, she is all very well, and seems laudably disposed to wear her new dignity—should she obtain it—without forgetting her former station."

"Your ladyship's words," said the obsequious Mr. Flammerton, "are marked by your usual discernment. There was a graceful reserve in her manner, the more commendable from the contrast with what we are so often compelled to witness in people of this sort." It was not without uneasiness that Lady Tonbridge beheld the sudden interest that had sprung up in favour of Mrs. Delfield and her claim—an interest that her ladyship foresaw it was highly probable would soon become deep and general through the circles of —shire, where, at present, her own influence was paramount. She could not brook the temporary obscuration of her star which this new object of interest might occasion. She would have crushed her outright, as her ladyship flattered herself that she had already done her rival, had not something whispered to her that the attempt might be hazardous; and besides, should Mrs. Delfield be unsuccessful in her lawsuit, her ladyship might make the same use of her that she had intended to make of her rival. She, therefore, resolved that, after a spirited assertion of her superiority to the cabals and contests of those beneath her, she would drop into the graceful and good-natured advocate and patron of Mrs. Delfield, a part which, to do her justice, Lady Tonbridge was well fitted to perform, where her high claims were duly acknowledged; and this course she adopted the more readily from the deep though secret hatred she had felt towards Mrs. Crawley, since the insult which that lady had put upon her.

"Yes, truly," she replied, in answer to Mr. Flammerton's last remark, "the vulgarity and *gaucherie* that we have to endure from wealthy parvenues, is equally honourable to themselves and to the tribe of fortune-hunters who thrust them upon us."

"Your ladyship," said Lord Dulwich, "can hardly intend to include Mrs. Delfield in either class?"

"Oh! by no means," she replied, "I like her exceedingly, and shall be delighted to hear of her success."

"There are few who will not join your ladyship in that wish," said Mr. Flammerton, with an air of lofty patronage. "But," turning with solemnity to Lord Dulwich, "let me remind your lordship that we know nothing of this lady as yet, but that she is of the same family as her rival"—here Mr. Flammerton's countenance showed the very extremity of disgust—"and, in spite of what we have seen to-day, we can have small confidence in a stock which has borne one such shoot as the present occupant of Southoaks."

"Whoever Mrs. Delfield may be, sir," replied Lord Dulwich, "I am much mistaken if she will not confer quite as much lustre upon any station to which she may be raised, as she can possibly derive from it."

This speech was received with a murmur of approbation.

"True, very true, my lord," returned Mr. Flammerton, hedging, "the defects of birth and early education may undoubtedly be veiled, if not concealed, by refinement of manner."

"Well," exclaimed Sir Albert, "if her family be but equal to her horsemanship, she may match with the highest peer of the kingdom."

Anatole herself could not ride with more strength and grace," exclaimed another.

"She is a noble figure on horseback," said Tom.

"A Diana mounted!" exclaimed Frank.

"And no buskin'd nymph of the chase," said Mr. Frumpton, "ever showed a more charming foot and

ankle. It peeped from under her riding-habit with the prettiest grace imaginable."

"Nay, surely," laughed her ladyship, "her nymphhood has passed away. Better, like Mr. Dawton, compare her to the goddess herself, to whom she bears a nearer resemblance in austerity as well as years."

"And in beauty no less than in either," exclaimed Lord Dulwich.

"Well, well," returned the lady, "I won't attack her any more, but her face bears too much of a family likeness to that of her rival to please me."

But from this opinion all who had seen Mrs. Crawley loudly dissented, Mr. Frumpton protesting with due politeness, that he should as soon have thought of comparing Venus to the Witch of Endor, while Mr. Brereton protested with his usual freedom that her ladyship must certainly be gifted with second sight.

After the subject of Mrs. Delfield was dropped, the conversation languished, and the evening passed off with a dulness unusual in Sir Albert's drawing-room. Lady Tonbridge was mortified and out of temper, because she had been unable to bias the opinion of the company as she wished with regard to Mrs. Delfield. The young ladies were deprived of their evening flirtations by the unaccountable though resolute apathy of the gentlemen; and Lord Dulwich, in general the life of the company, was silent and abstracted throughout the evening.

It happened as Lady Tonbridge had foreseen. When it became known that the new claimant was a lady not much above thirty, and in person and manners the very reverse of her rival, the interest that was created in her favour was the greater from the apathy that had preceded it, and from the universal dislike of Mrs. Crawley. Mrs. Delfield took up her residence at a small house in a retired part of the country, and soon received numerous invitations to join the highest circles of —shire. She declined most of these invitations for the present; yet, whenever she did appear, she became at once the very loadstar of the circle in which she moved. To manners in the most received style of the highest rank, Mrs. Delfield united a natural simplicity and naivete, which at once arrested the attention and fixed the regard of all who saw her. Her conversation was brilliant and varied; her wit playful and humane; yet she seemed rather a spectator than a votary of the gay pageant of society; and a shade of sadness that would sometimes steal imperceptibly over her conversation and manners was not the least of those charms by which, as with a wand of an enchantress, she retained all those within her influence who approached her. It was wondered how a woman of such personal attractions and extraordinary powers of pleasing, should be so indifferent to the admiration she excited!

Meantime it had been ascertained, by a comparison of dates and other circumstances, that Edgar Merton's amazonian deliverer on the night of the robbery could have been no other than Mrs. Delfield herself; a fact that certainly did not lessen the interest that surrounded her, while the reserve that she showed when the subject was mentioned before her, and her obvious wish to avoid allusion to it, enhanced the chivalry of the action itself, in the opinion of many; the more censorious, however, said that she did wisely in shunning allusion to her eccentric habit of riding about alone after dark, an insinuation which might certainly have tainted her reputation, had it not been discovered through the lady's domestics, that an attendant had been with her on the night of the robbery—that, passing through the county town, she had sent the man on some trifling errand, telling him that she would walk her horse homeward, until he overtook her. The groom had been detained longer than he expected, and thus it was concluded that she had come upon the scene of action during this interval.

As for Edgar, the change in his habits and his sudden love of poetry and day dreaming, were easily connected with his fair amazonian friend. To be indebted for his life to such a woman, and not fall in love with her, was an offence that must outlaw him for ever from the court of Cupid and Hymen. It was rumoured that the lady was by no means indifferent to the passion that she had excited, and although they met but seldom in society, and nothing then occurred to confirm these suspicions, it was thought that he was only temporising, at the suggestion of his family—who, poor and proud, had long designed to marry him to an heiress—until the lawsuit was decided, and that, in the event of Mrs. Delfield's success, he would immediately appear in the enviable character of co-inheritor of the splendid estates of Southoaks.

(To be continued.)

New Books.

A TRIP TO MEXICO. BY A BARRISTER. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

NILE NOTES. BY A TRAVELLER. London: Bentley.

THESE are two of the newest books of travel, and both testify sufficiently to the gadding disposition of the modern Anglo-Saxons. The "Barrister," who is, of course, a Londoner, runs across the ocean for a ten months' pleasurable ramble in Mexico, as a Londoner of last century might have made a trip to Tunbridge Wells. He enjoys himself, returns home without notes of his stay, is asked questions by the customary numerous circle of admiring friends, finds that his replies give interest, and bethinks him of writing a book. So down he sits, consults his memory and a few authorities, and lo! this well-sized octavo is the result. The traveller on the Nile is, as the reader will afterwards discover, a much more stately person, and gives no revelations of his reasons for travel, or his mode of composition. We easily make him out, however, to be a young American smitten by a desire to eclipse Longfellow's Hyperion. So he, too, steps over the Atlantic, and wanders through what are our west and east, and we shall be much surprised if he do not favour us, before long, with notes other than Nile ones, written in the same style as the present volume, that is, a mixture of Benjamin D'Israeli and Mr. Kinglake, of Eöthen, with a strong occasional soupçon of Carlyle and Emerson!

To begin with "The Barrister"—he is unlucky in his subject, which, not in itself a remarkably interesting one, has been well-nigh worn thread-bare of late years. We still wait for a good account of the invasion of Mexico by the Americans, which, if written by an eye-witness, might be a very amusing volume. But otherwise, after the works of Madam Calderon de la Barca and Mr. Ruxton, it would require qualities and labour, to neither of which the Barrister lays claim, to produce a work on Mexico, worthy of an existence out of the circulating library. Madame Calderon de la Barca, a clever Scotchwoman, married to the Spanish resident at Mexico, moved, of course, in the "best circles" of the country and the capital, and having, withal, a very vivid and dashing pen, with no disinclination to use it, she made her "Life in Mexico" one of the most amusing books of the kind that ever female talent has produced. Mr. Ruxton, on the other hand, who visited Mexico after the American invasion, was a shrewd, plain-spoken English officer, who has minutely described all the external features of Mexican civilization or non-civilization. However, without pelting our Barrister too much with the merits of his predecessors, let us admit that he has made a readable book, and gleaned traits of Mexico and the Mexicans which they had left untouched. Probably the best portion of it is that for which the author finds it neces-

sary to apologize, his longish account of a residence at Tepic, an obscure Mexican town within fifty miles of the Pacific. Here, with some mercantile friends, he spent six of his ten months' trip, and it is from this part of the volume that we shall give our one extract. Everybody knows that what little manufacturing there is in Mexico is carried on by English or Americans. Sooner or later, probably Mexico will belong to America, and that some gain at least will accrue to the "annexed" or conquered territory, the following passage shows:—

A COTTON-FACTORY IN THE MEXICAN FAR WEST.

"Within a mile of Tepic, at the river-side, stands a cotton-manufactory called Iauxa, built and owned by the English mercantile house established in Tepic. This manufactory is not very large. It is, however, admirably managed, and is entirely under the superintendence of American workmen, who are eight or ten in number, and have the sole charge of the different departments. The number of natives employed in it is about two hundred, and they work day and night in two gangs. The goods manufactured are only of one kind, viz., a very coarse cotton-cloth, called manta, of which all the poorer classes in that part of Mexico make their clothes.

"The machinery employed is all American. The power used is water, which is furnished by a lead from the river, taken off some distance above the Magdalena, and of which the supply is always good. The manufactory has been at work more than ten years, and from its simple inexpensive style and good management, has been a very profitable concern; more so than any other in Mexico. The building is brick whitewashed, in a quadrangular form, and one side abutting on the river. The rooms are large and well-ventilated, lighted at night by lamps of cocoa-nut oil; large vats of this are kept in the out-buildings, and, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, constantly require a pan of lighted charcoal floating about to keep them from freezing. There is a steam-boiler attached to the factory, used for heating large metal cylinders for drying the thread after its immersion in size, and before being woven. I forget the number of looms always at work, but I should think nearly a hundred. I know the quantity of stuff made in the mill is immense. Every Saturday night the wages are paid, and everything connected with this operation is conducted as regularly as in England or the United States. The Americans, and deservedly too, get high wages, many of them five dollars or 11. per day. They are all engaged by contract, and are found houses adjoining the manufactory."

Pass we now to the American gentleman who, undeterred by the recent elaborate works of Miss Martineau (whom he always calls "Poet Harriett") and Mr. Warburton (who, with him, is "Poet Eliot"), now essays to chant the praises of antique Nile. His is the hit-or-miss style of the rhapsodist, and on the whole it must be said that he often hits. It is a brilliant book, full of vivid thought and feeling, and, luckily for us, one which can be judged of from extracts.

Emerson has said "travelling is a fool's paradise." Let us listen to the American gentleman's

DEFENCE OF TRAVEL.

There are those who cultivate chimney corners, and chuckle that a rolling stone gathers no moss, who flip their fingers at Memnon and the sources of the White Nile; who order warm slippers, and declare that travelling is a fool's paradise. Yes! but set in the azure air of that paradise stands the Parthenon, perfect as Homer. There are the Coliseum, the Forum, and the earth-quaking memories of Rome. There Memnon sings and the Gondolier. There wave palms, and birds of unimagined plumage float. There are the mossy footsteps of history, the sweet sources of song, the sacred shrines of religion.

Objective all, I know you will respond, fat friend of the warm slippers, and you will take down your Coleridge and find—

"O lady, we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live."

Yes—again, but I mistrust your poet was abroad when he sang these numbers. The melodious mystic could not reach the fool's paradise through the graceful Grecian gate, or the more congenial Egyptian Pylon—so through rainbow

airs, opium-pinioned, he overflowed the walls, and awhile breathed other airs. The lines are only partially true. Elia, copying accounts in the India house, could not enjoy in the wood upon which he wrote, the charm of the tree which had "died into the desk." And though nature be the mirror of our moods—we can yet sometimes escape ourselves—as we can sometimes forget all laws.

But it threatens to become terribly Emersonian—and we stop.

The following passage, combining description with information, is characteristic:—

NUBIA AND THE NUBIANS.

The Nubians devote themselves to nudity, and to smearing their hair with castor-oil.

At least it seems so from the river. Nor have they much chance to do anything else, for Nubia only exists by the grace of the desert, or the persistence of the Nile in well-doing. It is a narrow strip of green between the mountains on both sides, and the river. Often it is only the mere slope of the bank which is green. You ascend through that, pushing aside the flowing lupin and beans, and stand at the top of the bank in the desert. Often the desert stretches to the stream, and defies it, shoring it with sheer sand. A few taxed palms, a few taxed Sakias, the ever neat little houses, the comely black race, and, walling all, the inexorable mountains, rocky, jagged of volcanic outline and appearance—these are the few figures of the Nubian panorama.

Dates, baskets, mats, the gum and charcoal of the mimosa, a little senna, and further south, ebony, sandal-wood, rice, sugar and slaves, are all the articles of commerce—lupins, beans, and dhouna, a kind of grain, the crops of consumption.

It is a lonely, solitary land. There are no flights of birds, as in Egypt; no wide valley reaches, greened with golden plenty. Scarcely a sail whitens the yellow blue of the river. A few solitary camels and donkeys pass, spectral, upon the shore. It seems stiller than Egypt, where the extent of the crops, the frequent villages and constant population, relieve the sense of death. In Nubia, it is the silence of intense suspense. The unyielding mountains range along so near the river, that the Howadji fears the final triumph of the desert.

"Through the great gate of the Cataract you enter a new world, south of the poet's "farthest south." A sad, solitary, sunny world—but bravery and the many virtues are always the dower of poor races, who must roughly rough it to exist.

"In appearance and character, the Nubians are the superiors of the Egyptians. But they are subject to them by the inscrutable law that submits the darker races to the whiter, the world over. The sweetness, and placidity, and fidelity, the love of country and family, the simplicity of character and conduct which distinguish them, are not the imperial powers of a people. Like the Savoyards in Europe, the Nubians go down into Egypt and fill inferior offices of trust. They are the most valued of servants, but never lose their home, longing, and return into the strange, salty silence of Nubia, when they have been successful in Egypt."

We close with two fragments:—

THE UNOBTRUSIVENESS OF ART.

"The perfection of any art is always unobtrusive. Yes, in a sense unimpressive, as the most exquisite of summer days, so breathes balm into a vigorous and healthy body, that the individual exists without corporeal consciousness, yet is then most corporally perfect. * * * We have all seen the same thing in beautiful faces. The most permanent and profound beauty did not thrill us, but presently, like air to the lungs, it was a necessity of inner life. Men who feel beauty most profoundly are often unable to recall the colour of eyes and hair, unless, as with artists, there is an involuntary technical attention to those points."

SLAVES IN THE EAST.

"Not one kneels and inquires if he is not a man and a brother; and the Venuses "carved in ebony" seem fully satisfied with their crisp, closely curling hair, smeared with castor-oil. In Egypt and the East generally slavery does not appear so sadly as elsewhere. The contrasts are not so vivid. It seems only an accident that one is master and the other slave. A reverse of relations would not appear strange, for the master is as ignorant and brutal as the servant."

Original Poetry.

THE MAGDALEN.

[The reader will have seen engravings, after a picture by Corregio, bearing the above name, and representing a fair penitent lying on the sward, reading a large volume, meekly, meditatively.]

CEASELESSLY still, with tears, in the book of life do I ponder—

Ceaselessly ponder and read, searching out peace for my soul.

Sinful and wayward, and black my past looms up in the distance,

Like a dark, perilous road, struggling athwart a morass.

I have been in my sin, as a proud-robed, haughty Gomorrah,

One—yet a city in sin; braving the vengeance of God.

I braided my hair with gold, my beautiful, long-flowing tresses,

Bared my firm-swelling breast—laughed in the smile of the Sun.

Light of my beauty, alone, for that was he hung in the heaven;

The birds sweet-singing at eve, carolled my praises alone.

Deep in the valleys cool meers lay serene for my mirror;

Flowers were fashioned that I chaplets might weave round my brow,

Breezes that bore on their wings dear scents of odorous roses,

Were but light heralds of God, wafting his perfumes to me.

Man that stands, in his strength, the masterpiece of Creation,

Powerful to think and to do, stamp in the image of God;

He existed alone to bow that strength to my Beauty,

Had but one Destiny here—slave to a woman's desire.

Thus I towered, as of old, pride-blown that haughty Gomorrah,

I was the empress of earth, Nature was vassal to me.

I saw not that she who is made is sister to all the created—

Saw not that He who did make Beauty transcendent as mine,

Was the great mind of the Spheres, and fashioning all for a purpose,

Nature and life gave a voice, teaching the Pure and the Good:

Some of the sages and bards, high stories of lofty self-conquest,

Passion vanquished by mind, Virtue triumphant o'er Lust.

Blinded by passion and pride, these neither saw I, nor heard I,

I swept by as a queen, brushing them all in my train.

And to crown all my sin, my body, my beautiful body,

Cause of my pride, and made for truer, holier use,

Gave I over to Vice, the Maker's blessing perverting.

This fair mansion of God, made I the palace of Sin.

So now that the better light has come once more o'er my spirit,

Now that my soul is sad, full of repentance and shame;

Ceaselessly day and night, in the Book of Life do I ponder,

Ceaselessly ponder and pray, searching out peace for my soul.

J. STORES SMITH.

NIL ADMIRARI.

By WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

HORACE and Creech,
Thus do ye teach?
Sad silly speech!

One idle pen
Writes it, and ten
Write it agen.

Pope! and could you
Sanction it too?
'Twill never do.

Sages require
Much to admire;
Nought to desire.

God! grant thou me,
Nature to see
Admiringly.

Giving the flower,
Child of the hour,
Part of thy power.

Lo! how the wise
Read in her eyes,
Thy mysteries!

HOMER'S DEATH.

THRICE thirty years, oh King! my soul hath dwelt
In darkness; but this night a deeper shade
Descending, wraps me in the night of death.
Not unforewarned of the immortal Gods
I die: but impotent are they to change
The blind, tyrannic judgment of the Fates.

Yet not to many is it given, thus
To die in peace at home; for most are slain
In battle, or by shipwreck, or more hard,
Unwittingly offend revengeful Gods,
And perish; seeming by their own free will
To act; but influenced by a power unseen.

Far happier I; by many of the Powers
Above regarded with peculiar care:
Myself, not seldom, revered as a God:
Nor only in our ruder isles, where men
Are prone to reverence, but within the walls
Of Athens, and of Argos by the sea.

And now, as unto him the sultry day
Seems long, who passing to his toil at dawn
In early summer, lingers till the sun
Drops, and the dark earth fainteth for the dew;
So unto me the journey of my life;
And such the tardy coming of my night.

So long it seems, oh King, since in the land
Of Egypt dwelling, to enrich my soul
With wider knowledge gained in lands remote,
I suffered from the glaring sands, that smite
The Egyptians, but the stranger, doubly sore;
And thence returned, stone-blind unto this hour.

When tenderly Athenian Pallas gave
For recompense, a nobler inward sight
And nobler, imaging the outward world;

Whereby as in deep visions I beheld
The matter of my songs, and sang entranced
And unabashed, before the thrones of Kings.

I sang the deeds of Gods, and men, who were
Near kinsmen of the Gods; yet fell like hail
Wind-driven, scattered on the plains of Troy.
Thence of Ulysses, wisest of the Greeks,
Far driven on sea and land with all his men;
For that they slew the oxen of the sun.

These things the Achæians know; for 'twere a thing
Unjust, and hateful in the eyes of Jove,
If such things faded from the minds of men:
Therefore the soldier tells Achilles' ire:
And many a slender-shapen Greekish girl
Sings of the wrongs of meek Penelope.

And for their sake, my body shall not miss
Rich funeral honours; neither less than found
Tiresias, when the people quite forsook
The streets of Thebes, and from the neighbouring isles
Gathering (as to besiege a rocky town
In concert) thither came both chiefs and men.

Who lit a pile upon the sandy bay
At nightfall; while the people standing round
Brought, each in turn, his gift and poured thereon,
Much wine, until the morning touched the hills,
Then some one took the ashes from the midst,
Wine drenched, and shut them in a golden urn.

But now, I pray thee, quickly send and find
My slave Eumæus, that he take a gift
And blessing from me, who hath loved me well,
And served me with a zeal that wears not.
Quickly! for not in vain am I forewarned:
Strength fails me, and my feet are stony cold.

W. M. THOMAS.

UNCLE JOHN;

OR, THE ROUGH ROAD TO RICHES.

ENGLAND affords, even in these degenerate days of peace, innumerable examples of the class called "lucky fellows;" that is to say, men who have begun life with a charity-school education and a shilling, and are now prosperous in wealth and station. Perhaps it is hardly fair to impute to good-luck, what may be mainly owing to industry, frugality, patience, and perseverance. But, after all, one may starve with all these virtues, in spite of all that copy-book maxims may say to the contrary. There is good-luck in success, whatever may have been the qualities by which that good luck has been seized at the right moment and turned to good account. Industry, frugality, patience, and perseverance, form a perfect locomotive—good-luck is the engine-driver who turns the handle and sets them in motion at the right moment.

Men who have been the "architects of their own fortunes," never admit that good-luck has had anything to do with their prosperity. Their pardonable vanity at their own success makes them guilty of a species of ingratitude to Providence. Listen to one of these old gentlemen holding forth to his hopeful son or nephew on his, the said old gentleman's, past life; on his early poverty, his self-denial, his hard work, and his subsequent reward; and the burden of his discourse is ever the same,

"Alone I did it, boy!"

Should the listener at any point be tempted rashly to exclaim "how lucky!" the old gentleman will turn on him with a severe frown and say, "luck, sir; nonsense. There's no such thing as luck. Live on a crust, sir; that's the only way for a man to get on in

the world." The old gentleman quite forgets that if his first venture in the *Chutnee* East Indianman had been a failure; or his first dabble in the stocks had not been followed by the battle of Leipsic; or his senior partner, who had nine-tenths of the profits of the business, had not departed this life suddenly in an apoplectic fit, he would have held a very different position in the world, and probably have been now a denizen of the second floor over his counting-house in the city, instead of a resident in Hyde Park Gardens.

An excellent specimen of this class of old gentlemen is "Uncle John." The obscurity of his early days is so great that even he himself finds it difficult to penetrate it. That he had a father and a mother is incontestable; but these worthy people seem to have left this world of sin at so early a period of "Uncle John's" existence, that, for all practical purposes, he might as well have been without them. His first juvenile recollections are connected with yellow stockings, leather shorts, a cutaway coat with a tin badge on it, and a little round woollen cap with a tuft in the middle of it, resting on a head formed by nature to accommodate a cap of double its dimensions. In a word, "Uncle John" was a charity-boy.

It must not be imagined that the above fact has ever been communicated by Uncle John himself; for the worthy man is weak enough to be ashamed of it, though he will discourse of his early privations in a mystical manner, with the design apparently of inducing you to regard him rather as a counterpart of Louis Philippe in his days of early exile, than as a commonplace, though equally interesting (to a right-thinking mind) young gentleman in yellow stockings. It is a fact, however, as indisputable as that Uncle John is now worth thirty or forty thousand pounds.

Emerging from the charity-school, and exchanging the leather shorts and yellow stockings for corduroys and grey worsted socks, Uncle John obtained the appointment of office-boy to a Temple attorney. His duties were multifarious—sweeping the office and serving writs, cleaning boots, and copying declarations. His emoluments were not large—seven shillings a week and "find himself," which was less difficult, poor boy, than to find anything for himself. But Uncle John persevered and was not disheartened. He lived literally on a crust, and regaled himself only with the savoury smells issuing from the cook's-shop, which was not only an economical luxury, but had the advantage of affording a stimulus to the imagination. He actually saved two shillings a week out of his salary, not to mention an occasional donation of a shilling on high days and holidays from his master.

Uncle John was never idle. When he had nothing to do for his master, which was rarely the case, he used to take a pen and any loose piece of paper or parchment, and copy, or imitate, the lawyer's engrossing hand—known as court-hand—till he became a good penman in this cramped style of writing. Having accomplished this object, Uncle John determined to "better himself," by getting a situation as copying clerk instead of office boy. He succeeded in his attempts, and was installed in another attorney's office as engrossing clerk at twelve shillings a week—a salary which appeared to him, at the time, enormous. But riches did not turn his head. The only increase which he made in his previous expenditure, was in wearing a rather cleaner shirt, and discarding corduroys for some more genteel material. Uncle John was too wise and too self-denying to be seduced *inside* the cook's-shop yet.

He was now saving at least six shillings a week, which is 15*l.* a year! For four years no change took place in his condition. He still lived in his solitary garret; worked hard all day, and borrowed law books from the articulated clerks in the office, which he read at home at night. At home! poor fellow—what a name

for his miserable little room up in the tiles of a house in a narrow court out of Fleet-street! But Uncle John was a brave fellow and worked on without stopping to sentimentalize.

A promotion now took place in the office, and Uncle John was made chief common-law clerk at one pound a week. He had rendered himself quite competent for the duties by his midnight studies. He was never absent from his post, never forgot anything, and was never ill; for he had the strength of a horse. It is suspected that about this time, Uncle John paid one or two visits to the cook's-shop; but it must not be supposed that the visits were more than one or two. As a rule, Uncle John dined on a piece of the cheapest meat he could purchase, boiled by himself in his garret.

He was wise enough, however, to be very neat in his dress, and thereby gained the credit of being a very respectable young man in the eyes of his employer; for it is a very remarkable fact that clerks are always expected to dress like gentlemen when their salaries are not even large enough to buy them food.

Another four years passed away, when one day Uncle John, having duly screwed up his courage, walked into his master's private room, and, after a little preliminary hesitation, ventured to hint that he should like to be article! The master stared—the clerk remained silently awaiting his answer.

"Are you aware," inquired the former, "that the expense of the stamp, &c., is one hundred and twenty pounds?"

Uncle John was aware of it, and he was prepared with the money. He had saved it out of his miserable salary.

The master stared still more. But, after a short time, he consented to article Uncle John, and to continue his salary during the term of his articles. Uncle John was in ecstasies, and so far forgot his usual prudence that evening as to indulge in half a pint of bad port wine—a taste, by the way which he has retained to this day.

He was now a happy man. Every thing was "in train" now to make him one day a "gentleman by Act of Parliament"—as Attorneys are facetiously termed. It would certainly require something more than even the omnipotence of an Act of Parliament to confer the character on some of the fraternity.

During the first year of his articles the managing clerk died, and Uncle John was promoted to that office with a salary of two hundred a year. Here was, indeed, a rise in life—from seven shillings a week to two hundred a year! Happy Uncle John. But you deserved it all; for you had plenty of the courage which is prepared for all ills, and endures those which it cannot conquer.

Long before the five years of his articles had expired, the clerk had made himself so absolutely necessary to the master, that the latter could scarcely have carried on the business for a month without him. Therefore, when the time arrived at which he ceased to be a clerk and become himself an attorney, Uncle John hinted to his master that he was going to leave him. Cunning Uncle John! You had no such intention; but you knew that your master would take alarm, beg you to stay, and offer you a partnership. Of course—and he did so.

Uncle John's path in life was from henceforth comparatively smooth. He was the working partner in a business which was both profitable and of good quality. Within a few years his partner was foolish enough to quarrel with him, and to demand a dissolution of the partnership. Uncle John readily consented, and all the clients knowing well who was the man that understood the business and transacted it, followed him; and he became an attorney with a practice of two thousand a year, and no partner to share the profits.

His economical habits never forsook him. He married and kept a decent table; but save in a love of good wine (or at least what his uneducated taste considered so), he had nothing but the ordinary necessities of life. How much he saved each year who shall say? He had no children, and his practice increasing while his wants stood still, he became what he is now—a prosperous and highly respected old gentleman.

It is the fashion of the old to point out such men as models for the imitation of the rising generation. The young, on the contrary, make them the subjects of their ridicule, for their bad grammar and worse manners. Let us see if we can find out the truth, unbiassed by either party. Uncle John is now a rich man, an honourable man, a hardworking man, and in the main a sensible man. He has attained his position in life by patience, perseverance, and industry, favoured also by a little of that good luck to which we first referred. But Uncle John is deficient in many of the characteristics which adorn human nature. Is it not natural that he should be so? Where was he to learn the gentler feelings of his kind—affection, sympathy, benevolence? In his garret, alone and unfriended? He is mean and parsimonious. He is worth forty thousand pounds, and his deceased brother's child is starving with his wife in a suburban garret. Uncle John will not aid him with a penny. Who aided him? Did he not live in a garret, and save money too? Was he such a fool to marry before he could keep a wife? Uncle John was guilty of no weaknesses in those days: he cannot forgive them in another.

His only brother dies, leaving a large family and a widow—unprovided for: for the children have eaten up all he could ever earn. Uncle John does not like the widow (perhaps because she had so many children), but he gives her 50*l.* a year. His own income is about four thousand.

His only sister is also left a widow without a sixpence. Uncle John gives her 50*l.* a year. "People should not marry imprudently. He can afford no more; he has a great many calls upon him." Perhaps so; but the answer to such calls is always, "not at home."

He has many clerks now. He makes them all work twelve hours a day. Why not? He worked twelve hours a day.

He has article! clerks too. They must work twelve hours a day also. He did it. True, Uncle John; but you had your salary for it; while they, on the contrary, pay you for the privilege of working for you.

There is an old adage that a slave makes the worst tyrant. Uncle John exemplifies it. Because he suffered poverty and privation, he thinks that every youth should endure the same. Because nature had given him the constitution of a horse, he thinks that every one should have a similar one.

Such men as Uncle John are striking examples of certain qualities; and of those particular qualities which conduce to success in life. Their highest praise (perhaps there is no higher praise in the world) is their unflinching integrity. But we cannot bring ourselves to think them—on the whole—models for imitation. After all, there is selfishness at the bottom of their first motives, and this quality grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength, till, in their old age, they are impatient at all the enjoyments of youth. The hardships of their younger days are not only to be pitied for the pain they must have inflicted at the time, but because they have closed up all the avenues through which the gentler, nobler, and more generous sympathies of our nature find their way into the heart. Their want of education has not been of the mind alone, but of the affections; and as it is ten thousand times more difficult to learn a language or a science in old age than in youth, so it is infinitely more difficult (if it be not impossible) to teach the science of the affections,

and the language of the heart, to the old man whose youth has known nothing of either. Affliction and adversity teach oftentimes sympathy and benevolence; but to do so they must have followed on happier times, and not have been a birth-portion. You may praise and respect "Uncle Johns," but you cannot love them—neither can they love you. C.

DANIEL DEACON.

DANIEL DEACON was once a popular writer, victim of the fickleness of public taste; for his fate society had no commiseration. His occupation is gone, like that of the shoe-buckle makers and the stage coachmen. Change of fashion, or march of intellect, or whatever we may call it, left him behind upon the road; or, to take a better metaphor, one sudden revolution of fortune's wheel shot him off, at a tangent, into a debtor's prison. When last he made his appearance, poor fellow, at the Insolvent Debtors' Court, a little note, at the foot of his schedule, mollified the commissioner, and turned aside the bitter lecture upon extravagance of the counsel who had been retained by his most obdurate creditor to oppose him. "I attribute my misfortune," said he, "to the sudden change which has lately come over the spirit of periodical literature. My talent is for imaginative writing. The growing utilitarianism of the age has destroyed my living." He concluded with some remarks, which gave a plaintive and touching interest to his statement, not often to be derived from the perusal of a legal document. I forget the words which he used, but I retain the impression which they left in my mind. It was akin to that soothing melancholy with which we close a volume of Macpherson's Ossian, when the shadowy bard of Morven and Glen Tilt concludes one of his *Æolian* lamentations with a doleful plaint over the days that will come no more.

Only fifteen years ago (so rapid are the revolutions of the aforesaid wheel) Daniel Deacon was in the zenith of his popularity. I was then the editor of the " Fireside Delight—a journal of thrilling interest," and he was our most able contributor to the thrilling department of that popular magazine, once the idol of the reading public, with a *bona fide* circulation of thirty thousand copies weekly. The proprietor, Mr. Pell, was a gentleman skilful to observe the public taste, and to adapt his wares thereto. He kept a pony chaise, with exceedingly small wheels, and a little villa in the Wandsworth Road, upon the profits of his printing and publishing speculations. Myself and Mr. Deacon were engaged in reporting terrible accidents, and other matters of interest, which occurred in the metropolis, for several of the London newspapers, at the time when Mr. Pell discovered us, and with uncommon penetration suggested that our talents might be more profitably employed in the field of romantic fiction. With additional penetration, he remarked that the catastrophes which chance had thrown in the way of my friend were of a more appalling nature than those which had generally come within my experience. "I observe, Mr. Smith," said he to me, "that you have more of those business habits which are necessary for an editor than our friend D. Under your direction, however, he will become a useful man. I intend to confide to you the management of the new journal, which I am about to start."

Mr. Pell did not do things by halves. He was a man of capital, and when he had conceived and matured a scheme, he spared no expense in carrying it out. His skill for devising new methods of advertising bordered upon genius. Unluckily, no patent was obtainable for such inventions; otherwise, Mr. Pell would have gained a rapid fortune by that department alone. But, unprotected as he was by the law, other tradesmen pirated

his designs, and were enabled to set up villas at Putney and Hammersmith upon the profits derived therefrom. For the " Fireside Delight" alone, he invented two modes of advertising hitherto entirely unknown to this "nation of shopkeepers." First, he procured a stamping press, by means of which every penny piece which came into his establishment was indelibly engraved with the words "Have you seen the Fireside Delight, a journal of thrilling interest?" and then passed away to circulate throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. Then there was the hollow van, the first specimen of which ever seen in this metropolis, left the door of his printing-office, in a turning out of Holborn, one fine morning, in the month of May 1834. It excited considerable curiosity at the time, although it has since become one of the most familiar objects in our crowded thoroughfares. Then the secret of its hollowness was unknown to the public. Great was their astonishment, to see a caravan of more enormous dimensions than had ever before been known, moved with perfect ease by a diminutive and bony horse, whose feeble strides appeared, at first sight, to be totally inadequate to move that gigantic structure. Slowly it wound its way up Newgate-street and Cheapside, followed by a mournful train of cabs and omnibuses, the outside passengers of which had abundant leisure for the perusal of its announcement, in letters two feet long, of the important advent of the " Fireside Delight."

The new journal was soon found to be a successful speculation; or, in technical language, it went off well. Indeed, the sagacity of its spirited proprietor was seldom at fault. My salary, which was regulated by a sliding scale, dependent upon the circulation of the paper, exceeded my highest expectation. My duties, however, were not light. Mr. Deacon, myself, and occasionally another contributor, Mr. Charles Pitt Acre, by his friends familiarly called Pittaker, furnished, every week, the entire matter for each number. My contributions were mostly short tales. They always commenced by a bold plunge in *medias res*—generally with a conversation between a young lady and her cousin, or next friend. Having opened by an unimportant question from the young lady, I invariably paused, and described minutely her person, her character, and lastly, I gave a sketch of her life, from infancy upwards. Then, at two pages distant from the first words of the young lady, her cousin or next friend, who had patiently waited till my digression was concluded, replied to her question, and the conversation was continued. My *denouements* were always of a peaceful and satisfactory nature; differing, in this respect, from the scenes of Mr. Deacon's invention, in which blood flowed freely, and crimes of unheard-of terror and most ingenious atrocity were thickly sown through number after number. No one better than he knew how to harrow the feelings of his readers, and then break off abruptly with "Ha! ejaculated Wentworth in a voice of thunder," or some other stirring exclamation, calculated to leave them in breathless expectation of the following number. His greatest difficulty was to find interesting names for his characters. Names, with him, were half battles. This obstacle surmounted, he would lead his heroes through complicated mazes of adventure, till we believed that the public were satiated and looked for a new tale. He was expected at any time to wind up his story within a fortnight after receiving notice from me so to do. Plots, no matter how deeply laid, were to be exploded; heroines were to be extricated from situations no matter how delicate, within two weekly numbers, upon my giving the signal. Sometimes, on the other hand, when I have perceived that his labour was drawing to a termination, I have requested him, for some reason, to extend it. Then our readers were astonished to find his heroes, whom they had followed,

through all their misfortunes to the very threshold of matrimony and happiness, suddenly snatched away, and plunged again into a sea of troubles. He never objected to do this but once. I had not read the last portion, and was not aware how far matters had gone. It was too late. The heroine had been already married in that week's number.

But the most important part of my duties was the "Answers to Correspondents," which generally occupied at least a page of the Journal. "For this department," said Mr. Pell, in one of those fanciful advertisements which were always written by himself, "several eminent professors have been engaged, to whom, according to their different natures, the questions of our correspondents will be referred." However, notwithstanding Mr. Pell's pompous announcement, that department was assigned to me in all its branches. These answers were as much a fiction as the wildest creations of Mr. Deacon's fancy. It is true we received many letters; but the trouble of reading them would have been considerable, with the possibility of not being able to answer their questions when we had done so. It was obviously so much more easy and simple to invent, at once both question and answer, that we immediately adopted that plan. So our course was to cast all letters "to the Editor" into the wastepaper basket, and to trust entirely to fancy in filling the weekly two columns with answers to imaginary correspondents. Taking my pen in hand, I commenced with the first idea that struck me, without regard to the probability of such a question having been addressed to us. As, for example—

An Ardent Admirer.—We are not aware that the poet Burns imagined himself to be descended from one of the Scandinavian Scalds, or that any of his biographers have endeavoured to trace his origin to the remote times in which those celebrated bards are supposed to have flourished. The apparent connection between the two names is, we believe, purely accidental.

Some of our "answers," however, were not without a purpose; being, like the following, intended to increase our importance in the eyes of our readers.

The *Professor*, who writes to us from Oxford, is thanked for his good wishes. We will endeavour to continue to merit them.

Lord B.—his suggestion shall be attended to.

Another kind was intended exclusively for the eyes of our lady readers, who were supposed to be a numerous class. Such were

Laura.—Poets have boasted of the beauty of Spanish ladies, with their dark locks, and eyes like the gazelle; but to our taste, there are none to compare with the rosy-cheeked lasses of our dear native land.

Juvenis.—We should think, with a handsome exterior, and a fortune of two thousand pounds per annum, you will have no difficulty in finding a wife.

The appearance of the last "answer" in print was followed by several little notes, all in a sharp angular handwriting, much like the improved specimens of penmanship exhibited by that professor who reforms bad hands in twelve lessons, by dint of entangling the fingers in blue ribbon, and suspending the arm from a miniature gibbet. They were consigned with the others to the waste paper basket, for we never deviated from our rule in this respect, by that means saving ourselves the pain of perusing the complaints of our correspondents, over the neglect of the "several eminent professors."

The engagement of Mr. Pittaker, as a paid contributor, was purely accidental. He had previously been known to Mr. Pell and myself only as a jovial dinner table companion. Many of his droll sayings found their way into the "Fireside Delight"; but he was positively too indolent himself to write a line. It was only after repeated solicitation from Mr. Pell and myself, that he, at length, tendered us his first contribution; and it at once became evident that he was totally in-

competent, or unwilling to put upon paper the wit which flowed from him at the table. His contributions were encouraged in the hope of better things, but the sober character of his articles astonished us by the remarkable contrast they presented to the man. They consisted of essays and short sketches, written in rather a pompous style. There always seemed to me, I knew not why, a high-heeled shoe, and bagwig tone about them. They brought into your mind, as you read them, Hogarth's pictures, and Garrick's prologues, and Noll Goldsmith's plum-coloured coat. The action of thought was too rapid for me to note the links between them; but I always felt that there was some connection, which I could not at the moment trace. "Pittaker," said I to him one day, thinking I had discovered the reason, "you read too much the writers of the last century. They spoil your taste, with their solemn march in the steps of the great Dr. Johnson." He looked disconcerted; I believe, for the first time in his life. I did not know the reason at the time; but finding soon afterwards in an article, which he stated himself to have written, the rather antiquated expression "a dish of tea," my suspicions were aroused; and, after a search in the earliest numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, they were confirmed, by finding there the whole series of articles for which we had been paying Mr. Pittaker as original compositions. Some of them were, I believe, by Soame Jennings; others by Beau something, I forget exactly; and some might have been by the great Doctor himself.

Poor Pittaker! he was the idlest man I ever knew. Without any ostensible source of income, he contrived to become as stout as an alderman. His face was fat, smooth, and placid; except that one eyebrow would occasionally rise up, momentarily wrinkling the forehead just above, when something which he felt to be tiresome (what labour didn't he feel to be tiresome?) demanded his attention. He was a living refutation of those maxims upon the necessity for work, and the ruinous effect of idleness, which had hitherto been considered wholesome, and obvious. He never did anything for his living. At times, he would disappear altogether from the circle of his acquaintances for a month or so. Some feared that he was dead; others, who knew him better, knew that he was not dead, but sleeping. Yes, I believe, he used to be literally in bed the whole of the time. No one knew where he lived. He was to be heard of at a certain coffee-house, where letters waited for him till they became smoke dried. At length, like a tortoise after a long torpor, he would suddenly reappear, with his hat gracefully planted on one side, and his coat close buttoned across his ample chest.

But I am forgetting Mr. Deacon, to whose memory I had intended to consecrate this article:—

Dan Deacon, with thy name this tale began:

Dan Deacon, with thy name this tale shall end.

He walks, or staggers the earth no more. Mr. Pell was right; he was not a man of business habits. He didn't look it in the face. His cheeks were puffy and pale, and his nose was red. His jet black hair hung long and uncombed, shedding around a powerful odour of tobacco; yet he was always cleanly shaved; a deep blue mark about his mouth and chin telling where the razor had done its work. He was, moreover, inclined to be corpulent, and his manner was solemn. In convivial moments, a proper sense of dignity survived the use of his logical powers. He allowed no one, as he said, "To take liberties with him." He always checked in the bud that over familiarity which is said to breed contempt. Although his years were scarcely over thirty, he generally took the chair at a meeting of social neighbours, in the parlour of a tavern at Newington Butts; where he was invariably to be found in the evening. Men twice his age listened to him deferentially as he spoke, slowly and deliberately.

between the whiffs, from behind a dense cloud of tobacco smoke. Indeed, such was the esteem in which his conversational powers were held, that it was said that the first rummer of brandy-and-water was furnished to him gratis by the landlord, in acknowledgment of his value in attracting visitors.

The "Fireside Delight," after enjoying for some years a considerable share of popularity, began gradually to decline in circulation. Many causes may be assigned for this fact; amongst which was a gradual increase of periodicals whose aim was to create a liking for the useful and instructing in literature, to the disparagement of the entertaining. I felt the wind veering, and prepared to trim my sails accordingly; but Mr. Deacon, lulled by his dreamy temperament, closed his eyes to the approaching revolution, and drew his weekly salary as if things would always remain the same. The monster van continued to perambulate the metropolis, with a statement that the "Fireside Delight" had now attained to a circulation of three hundred thousand copies weekly; but the announcement was as hollow as the vehicle. It continued to fall off; until at last, paying no longer, Mr. Pell abruptly brought it to a close. I, having long prepared for such a catastrophe, immediately started another periodical, in which I advocated zealously the cause of "the people," and promulgated weekly some philanthropic scheme for their social or political regeneration. It was a matter of extreme regret to me that the talents of my friend Deacon could not be made available in that line. He returned to his old business; but his late occupation had somewhat unfitted him for reporting. Too long a familiarity with fiction had corrupted his veracity. His accidents became too fatal, his occurrences too lamentable, his catastrophes incredibly appalling. An investigation took place on the part of the newspaper editors, the result of which was that he fell into disgrace. Then he was seen no more at the dingy old coffee-house near the Temple, where he was wont in the evening to multiply his manuscript with the "Manifold Writer." After this, his descent was rapid as that of a spent rocket. In his last days he had nothing but the small income of his wife wherewith to obtain the stimulants which were more necessary to his existence than his daily bread. His wife, I have been told, was not always, poor thing! the miserable squalid woman, which I knew her. She was once a pretty girl, with keen black eyes, and raven curls. Her's was a marriage of affection. A respectable young lawyer, with an increasing practice, had sued to her in vain. Half a dozen steady young men did foolish things on her account. It happened that a volume of poems which Mr. Deacon had written in his youth, with some pieces which appeared in the magazines, led her to fancy herself in love with their unknown author. She wrote him a letter (I had this from her own lips) in which she opened to him her heart, said "she confided in his generous nature not to betray her—and begged he would not think ill of her for such an unfeminine proceeding." Daniel did not think the worse of her for it. He had as much of romance in his nature as she. Such a freedom as he called it "from the trammels of conventionalism" was the very thing to charm him. He wrote to her; said "he felt they were destined for each other, and requested her to meet him near the Elephant and Castle." They met, and he being also at that time a different man to what I knew him, his appearance did not disappoint her. What she stated to have been at first "only a vague instinct" became a sincere affection. I believe he came to love her in his turn; though a knowledge of her little income may have influenced him *à son insu*. She became a good wife to him; but, unlike the heroines of her husband's stories, whose troubles always ended on the marriage day, her's only began there. Much of the romance of their first

acquaintance must his conduct have destroyed; but she stayed by him, through it all—the most indulgent towards his failings of all who knew him. She saw how hopelessly he had fallen—how helpless he had become to free himself from his old habits; and perhaps, living with him daily, and knowing him better than any one else, she saw in him in spite of all his unkindness, something better than the coarse and farcical exterior which I have given. In the days of his adversity she had obtained the care of some chambers in one of the Inns of Court, by which she lived rent free, in a dusty mouldy two rooms at the top of the house. Her husband could not get from her her principal money; the lawyers having provided against that, but he made a point of regularly confiscating her dividends as soon as they became due. This was embarrassing for her, as she had four young children to support. For their sake she worked with her needle night and day. Sometimes, when he came home, as usual, at a late hour, she would reproach him with their misery. Then he would fix upon her a fearful gaze, and exclaim, "Tempt me not, woman! Do not harrow the feelings of a desperate man. Forbear to heap reproaches upon the cup of my misfortunes, already become too keen to bear!" Meanwhile his visits to the social parlour at Newington were uninterrupted. The end of all this was sudden. Mrs. Deacon generally retired to bed before his return from the social parlour. On getting up early one winter's morning, to her daily task, she found him in the outer room dead in his chair, his arm resting on the table, with a candlestick in his hand—the candle burnt down into the socket.

THE FOREIGN COUNTRY AT HOME.

IV.

ABERGAVENNY TO SWANSEA.

I HAD certainly no reason to be dissatisfied with Pont-y-pool on the score of insufficient Welshness; for, in all conscience, it was Welsh enough. I learned, however, that, whatever it might be in reality, it was nominally not Welsh but English. Monmouthshire, in short, had been taken into England, and ranked now as an English county. Pont-y-pool was still England then—how provoking! To think that I had not escaped from England even in a place that spelled its name with a small *y* in the middle! It was quite teasing that I could not yet say I had been in Wales—that, in fact, I might never be in Wales at all; and I longed to be able to set down my foot on soil that neither map nor mortal could deny to be Welsh.

The opportunity came sooner than I expected; and, leaving the Welsh of Pont-y-pool with tears in my eyes, and the firm belief that they were the most simple, courteous, credulous, and primitive of peoples, I found myself one fine spring afternoon on the box of a rattling, dashing, thorough-going mail *en route* for Merthyr and Swansea *via* Abergavenny. The coachman was communicative, full of the most knowing experiences in water-vermin and the dodges for taking them, and I, in the excitement of the fresh, bright afternoon, and the new adventure, the best of listeners. I did not miss, however, the glorious landscape of rich, rich fields that lay far away, for miles and miles, upon my right; and, in the midst of the necessary ejaculations of delighted surprise at the feats of otters, badgers, and what not, I kept muttering to myself "beautiful Monmouth, beautiful Monmouth!" I had to stay a night in Abergavenny, much to my own satisfaction, for *Humphrey Chirker* had made it a glorified creature of the mind to me. I did not stay much in mine inn then; nor did I repair to the billiard-room, which coaches, mistaking my tastes, but, at the same time, gratifying me amazingly therein, had recom-

mended to me; but I strolled up and down the town, and was never tired of poking into every street and lane I chanced upon.

In the morning, too, I had a little available time, and that I applied to a walk into the surrounding country. Truly, it was most beautiful! No man need be sorry to go and live in Abergavenny. There is one green mountain there, of singular shape, which it is quite a joy to gaze on; there is a lovely, pastoral stream, too, clear, and bright, and musical; there are pleasant, pleasant roads, that well out away into pleasant, pleasant fields, between sweet hedges, and past neat gateways with honeysucked lodges; and the town itself is as clean and wholesome as mind can wish for. Altogether, Abergavenny abides in my remembrance like the perfumed leaves of some sweet-briar I had plucked. Yet I obtained no more than a glance of it, and was speedily on my way towards stranger quarters. And often have I thought to myself since of the crowds of pilgrims to Chepstow and the Wye who, in all probability, have stood in Abergavenny by its one strange hill, and never fancied to themselves the still more wondrous regions which the Merthyr mail had power to open to them. I do not think there is in the kingdom such another ride as this, from Abergavenny to Swansea. I do not believe that to be carried to New Zealand would present much greater contrasts than these iron highlands have for him who as yet only knows the well-cultivated lowlands. The clear Welsh air; the long ridges of hills that run like combs over bleak, bare commons; the exquisite miniature, little valleys, that nestle in the mountain-bosoms down from these; the equally exquisite, rich, narrow straths, that lie like green ribands between two parallel hill-ranges; the uncouth houses; the uncouth towns of such; the uncouth language, the strange shapes of plant forms and supple features; the gigantic iron-works, that, amid blue, excavated mountains, thunder with the most indescribable din, and belch forth fire and smoke upon the scene; all is novel, strange, and unexampled; and all these things the ride from Abergavenny to Swansea abundantly possesses.

Leaving the rich scenery around Abergavenny, and soon after the coachman has pointed out to you the position of Crick-Howel, you are whirled through the most unsightly naked defiles, up steep precipices, and across the necks of mountains—up and on, over barren moors, through long cold villages of such mean aspect, that the gentleman you meet on horseback seems strangely out of place; and you wonder if he does, or if he can, live there! On you are borne, in this way, past the very skirts of all the great iron-works—Clydach, Nant-y-glo, Tirhowy, Ebbwvale, Tredegar, Rhymney—on, till, coming down Dowlais hill, with Merthyr at your feet, you are lost in amazement. That mountain on your left is certainly from the hell of Milton—there is not a vestige of green on it; blue, smoky, sulphury, it has an excavated, underground look everywhere. Then the houses—and the furnaces—and the strange population—you never saw such sights.

The coach changes horses here; and, as you stand on the steps of the Castle Green in this strange place, you feel quite floaty. This you are told is the scene of the Merthyr riots; and you feel still floatier as you body forth before your eyes a picture like the following:—

Prone to novelty, as of old, excitable and blustering, the thousands of these motley savages have gathered into crowds, with inflamed faces that promise perdition to the whole universe; they sway hither and thither before the door, clashing their staves, clicking their fowling-pieces, and gnashing forth their never-ending volleys of "Diaouls." They have already cleared several shops of bread, cheese, and beer; and one house they have wholly gutted of its contents. One

old woman, escaping thence with a jar of whisky as a lawful spoil, shouts out, simple soul, "Tyma Reform! Tyma Reform!" "Reform has come! Reform has come at last." Some sixty 93rd Highlanders have been hurriedly marched from Brecon; and one-half of them stand now in file before the door you stand on, leaning on their muskets, and eating their bread and cheese, while the scummy river of the mob, hoarse in Welsh, flows around and between them. Their comrades are within the house; and the iron-masters from the windows, by threats and conciliations, endeavour to disperse the rabble. In vain: clamour, bluster, swagger, and gesticulation, are as rank as ever; and it seems a very explosion of "diaouls." The Highlanders, however, or, as to this day they are called in Welsh, the Little Petticoats, are quite impervious; Welsh oaths fall dead on them; they eat their victuals. Suddenly, there is a cry, a rush, a bustle: the muskets of the inapprehensive soldiery are seized by the mob, and crash now on the skulls of their owners. Stunned, stupid, bleeding, hatless, weaponless, these few Highlanders are tossed upon the waves of the crowd, still struggling for the haven of the inn. The sword of an officer is sheathed in the body of a ring-leader. The sharp crack of musketry rings on the ear. The mob fires into the windows; and bullets pass between iron masters. The Little Petticoats within, indignant at the usage of their comrades, reply with interest; reply and again reply. The street is clear: the mob has dispersed suddenly into their cabins or into the defiles of their tips. But, all night long, there is tumult, agitation, apprehension, and excitement everywhere. The gentlemen and the soldiery repair to Penydarran House, and fortify the same. Brave messengers, with determined hearts, ride through the darkness to Cardiff, to Brecon, to Swansea, in quest of arms, in quest of military. One of these makes the journey, on the same horse, in the same night, twice between Merthyr and Cardiff; bringing arms and driving through the crowd each time scatheless. Morning breaks: from Tredegar—Rhymney—from all over the hills—from Newbridge, from Aberdare, from Hirwain—from every colliery or iron-work, far or near, come droves of workmen to swell the numbers of the insurgents, who, wild with excitement, fire off the conquered muskets, and threaten and gesticulate in the most furious fashion. Two black flags are seen; and the Hirwain men brandish one dipped in blood: the very hands of its bearer are incarnadine with the same; but it is the blood of a calf—a calf killed for the purpose! The tips have their thousands; the hill over Aberdare had its thousands; and, on the stony precipices that overhang the Brecon road, there are other thousands. These last have allowed a detachment of yeomanry sent to meet and escort the ammunition and remainder of the Highlanders momentarily expected from Brecon—to pass; but they intend to keep them there. The mouth of the defile is blocked up by a numerous band; and all up the precipices, there are others busy unfixing the rocks, and ready to roll them down on the heads of all who may be bold enough to try a passage.

The Swansea Yeomanry, mounted in hot haste, come tearing up from Swansea, gallop sword in hand through all but deserted Hirwain, and, with the most fearful menaces, valiantly threaten the bodies and frighten the souls of the few peaceable inhabitants who, remaining behind, have still curiosity enough to turn out and see these heroes. But into your houses again! we Swansea yeomanry, we dash at you and flourish the glittering steel above your heads; into your houses! we will settle you, ye savages of the hill, ye scum and riff-raff that dare make a disturbance in his Majesty's dominions. Ha! they flee before us! we have made clean work of it. On to Merthyr then, my gallant men, and do the same; are we not from Swansea? But what

cloud is that on Aberdare hill awaiting us? Workmen in thousands! How slow our horses have become! The cloud approaches, breaking on us as with a thunderstorm of Welsh oaths. We are powerless here. Gentlemen, gentlemen! leave us our lives! Here are our pistols! here are our swords! all but that one—for God's sake, gentlemen, do not take that sword, it was at the battle of Waterloo! "Hurra, hurra! hurra for the sword that was at the battle of Waterloo!" Ride back, gentlemen yeomanry, through deserted Hirwain! jingle what metal trappings may still remain to you, and pass through swiftly!

Thus brawl and bluster the dingy multitudes of the hills; and still the gentlemen are at Penydarran, with the handful of Little Petticoats. The Little Petticoats are at their ease, however, and know what they know. They are increased to about a hundred now; for the ammunition and the reinforcement have found a way over the hills to them. There are also some three hundred mounted yeomanry. The various multitudes have now collected into one multitude, and have settled on the Merthyr tips. The gentlemen, with the yeomanry and the Highlanders, leave their fastnesses now, and march upon them. The riot act is read; they are called on to disperse: they refuse. Forward! brave mounted yeomanry! The brave mounted yeomanry are sluggish. "Right and left, then," shouts a brave man, and my little Highlanders will do it. The hundred Little Petticoats step to the front—forward upon thousands: they level their muskets: they are in act to fire: an iron-master throws himself before them, yet again beseeches the mob;—succeeds. The motley rabble melts from their eyes like snow; and the Merthyr riots have come to their conclusion.

Now begins the chase of the law;—ringleaders are seized in their beds; guns, swords, and other spoils are recovered. One man—a simple fool of a fellow, the leader of the attack—swings round beneath the gallows; the hills are found in anecdotes for a generation; and the Little Petticoats remain personages of almost mythic renown.

Such is the picture you body forth, as you stand on the steps of the Castle Inn, floatingly. Suddenly military music strikes on the ear, surging the heart, and filling the eyes. A brass band comes up the street; behind it is a brawny figure, with the front, power, and reputation of a young Antony. That is an iron-master; and that is his surgeon beside him. They are followed by an orderly procession of well-dressed workmen, with sashes, banners, and other paraphernalia.

The coach is ready again, however, and you must go. On through Merthyr, and past Cyfarthfer; wondering at the monstrous blue tips and the castellated building with lovely grounds in the midst of them. As you mount the hill, you see down in the valley tents erected: thither wends the procession you have seen; and, as you listen to the romantic story of the coachman, in regard to the iron-masters in question, about their amazing personal strength; their recklessness of heat or cold, of wet or dry, of night or day, of time or season; their power of doing the work of any one workman, in their gigantic works, above ground or under ground, as well as that workman, and better than that workman—as you hear this tale, I say, and as you see the scene of festivity before your eyes, and hear the glorious music floating up the valley, and re-image the heroic figure that you saw, knowing, moreover, that he is a millionaire, and that these are but his workmen beside him—you believe that the old times are resuscitated—the grand old times, when master mingled with man, rest with toil, and festivity with drudgery.

Thus you dream; but the coach stops not. Up the hill, higher—higher—over such a barren mountain. Behold now, at your feet, another valley, into which you must descend! There, on your left, nestling in that

mountain-bosom, is Aberdare. Down straight before you, on that bleak common, that runs, strip-like, along that bleak comb of a ridge, smokes little Hirwain. Down the hill, on through that meagre, naked, squalid-looking Hirwain. Over the common, down into Cwm Neath; and now, is not this lovely? A long, green riband, flat, narrow; between two such picturesque mountain ridges, stretching to the sea.

You stop not, however; you come to low-lying Neath, with collieries and a seaport. Leaving Neath, you pass through the great copper works—the works where three-fourths of the copper in the world is extracted from the ore. Merthyr was unsightly enough; but what do you think of this? Foul boats in foul ditches, ghastly woodwork, chimneys coated with pollution, low, tumble-down huts smoking in the midst of such inconceivable lurid refuse, the vapour of verdigris for an atmosphere, and all around for miles bare and herbageless—blasted by the poisonous copper whose "savour of metal sick" your palate is even now vainly endeavouring to extrude. Courage! you have passed them. Swansea receives you; cheerful, cleanly, wholesome, somewhat *fast* Swansea, with the bay of the Mumbles and the sea-breeze, and the sea-view glorious and refreshing.

Such is a rapid sketch of the ride from Abergavenny to Swansea; and I hope that the reader will now believe that, for grandeur and for squalor, for beauty and for ugliness, for importance and for meanness, for interestingness and uninterestingness, it is unsurpassed in the kingdom.

Fragments.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

The Royal Academy is a monopoly, exercising only an evil influence on English art.—*Eclectic Review*.

USE SECOND NATURE.

You cannot keep some people out of the kitchen, merely because their grandfathers and grandmothers came out of it. A poor man and his wife walking along the neighbourhood of Portland-place, he said to her, peevishly, "What is the use of walking along these fine streets and squares? Let us turn down some alley!"—*Hazlitt*.

A HINT FOR JURYMEN.

Never let it be forgotten that there is scarcely a single moral action of a single man, of which other men can have such a knowledge on its ultimate grounds, its surrounding incidents, and the real determining causes of its merits, as to warrant their pronouncing a conclusive judgment upon it.—*Quarterly Review*.

WHO DEFENDED ROME.

The number of "foreigners" who assisted in the defence of Rome was from fourteen to fifteen hundred men; from fourteen to fifteen hundred men amongst a total of fourteen thousand; for it is well that Italy should know that fourteen thousand men, a young army without traditions, and improvised under the very fire of the enemy, held in check for two months thirty thousand soldiers of France. You knew all this, gentlemen, or you *could* have known it, and, therefore, you *ought* to have done so; and, nevertheless, you shamelessly gave out to the Assembly the number of foreigners as twenty thousand, as a proof that after all it was not the Roman idea that you had endeavoured to stifle in blood; and upon this cipher of your own invention depends the greater part of your argument. Foreigners! I entreat pardon of my country for having inscribed the word, after you, upon my page. What! Lombards, Tuscans, Italians, foreigners at Rome! And it is by you, Frenchmen, by you—who, in re-establishing the Pontifical throne, have been supported by Austrians and Spaniards—that this reproach is made. A year ago your provinces sent the *élite* of their youth to fight upon the plains of Lombardy, as to a convention of honour; but I do not remember that Radetzky ever called them in his proclamations *foreigners*. The absolute denial of Italian nationality has been reserved for the nephew of him who, at St. Helena, uttered these words:—"Unity of manners, of language, of literature, shows that Italy is destined to form a single country."—*Mazzini*.